

The **Melbourne Festival** in association with the
Australian Centre for Contemporary Art present

Bill Viola *The Messenger*

17 October - 1 November 1998

Old Melbourne Gaol Chapel

RMIT Building 11

Franklin Street, Melbourne

Tuesday - Sunday 11am - 7pm

Curator: Jenepher Duncan

Enquiries tel ACCA 9654 6422

Tickets \$10 / \$7

"(Chief among the) reasons why The Messenger is so effective, and affecting...is its visceral impact, the way it appeals to the senses and the imagination along avenues that are not entirely controllable. This is not a piece of art whose meaning can be, or has been, made orthodox." (The Sunday Times, 15.09.98)

The Messenger introduces the internationally renowned American video artist Bill Viola to Melbourne audiences and presents the first large scale video projection at the Old Melbourne Gaol Chapel. This acclaimed and controversial work tracks the slow surfacing of a naked man in water, his gasps for air, then his gradual sinking back into the depths.



Bill Viola, *The Messenger*, 1996 (video/sound installation). Photo: Kira Perov

Viola's "sense of cinematic grandeur (and a technical proficiency a CNN engineer would envy) have allowed him to free video art from intellectual pretense and small-screen constriction. You step into one of his room-size projections and the subtle poetry of his sequences of images and soundtracks washes over you."

(Newsweek, 17.07.95)

A pioneer of video art since 1973, Bill Viola has created a large body of video works and installations where sensory experience is heightened and the viewer is invited to explore the human condition, the nature of creativity and mortality. He has exhibited his video art works at major museums worldwide, and has been instrumental in the establishment of video as an accepted form of contemporary art.

Bill Viola represented the United States at the 1995 Venice Biennale and in 1997 was the subject of a 25 year retrospective organised by the Whitney Museum, New York which is currently touring Europe.

The Messenger is a component of the 1998 Melbourne Festival Visual Arts Program. Supported by the Art Gallery of New South Wales and the Sydney Festival.

The Messenger was commissioned for Durham Cathedral by the Chaplaincy to the Arts and Recreation in North East England. The exhibition tour is being managed by THE FRUITMARKET GALLERY, Edinburgh and the AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART, Melbourne.



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